

Confidential

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES

BRUNEI GALLERY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on
Wednesday 17th May 2006**

Members The Director (Professor C Bundy) Chair *=not present
Dr J Carpenter*
Professor S Chan
Professor C Clunas
Dr A Contadini
Professor L Croll
Ms K Hazell*
Ms J Rankine
Professor T Tomlinson

In attendance: Mr J Hollingworth
Ms J Onyejiako

Apologies: Dr. J Carpenter, Ms K Hazell

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on the 22nd February 2006 were **APPROVED**.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 It was **NOTED** that the Brunei Gallery has been exhibiting for 10 years this May and ideas for a way to highlight this achievement should be considered. It was **NOTED** that the SOAS website and art and archaeology department site should make this headline news. It was **AGREED** that John Hollingworth will send Hannah Lemon an exhibition list for possible inclusion in the media.

2.2 It was **NOTED** that the committee has devised and issued a policy on sales, commission rate of 15%, which is well below commercial rates, for those exhibitors that shall choose to sell work.

2.3 It was **NOTED** that funding has been secured for WSLOT to proceed.

3. Recent and Current Exhibitions

Mr Hollingworth reported on the success of recent and current exhibitions:

3.1 ***Egyptian Landscapes and Rural Africa***
(19 January – 17 March 2006) Main Gallery and first floor

It was **NOTED** that the final visitor figures for these were just over 14,000 and press coverage for the Wissa Wassef exhibition was very good. It was **NOTED** that the exhibition highlighted the advantage of being open on a Saturday and the galleries opening times now changed accordingly. Unfortunately our change of policy was not introduced in time for commissions and so missed this opportunity as the Egyptian Landscapes tapestries also proved a huge financial success for the organizers.

It was **NOTED** that the popularity of the Brunei gallery Saturday opening might make it possible to persuade the Brunei Gallery Café to also be open, especially as the bookshop is now open on Saturdays. It was **AGREED** that Lisa Croll would follow up this issue, once the tender has been completed.

Following discussion that the exhibition proved far better visually than the initial proposal suggested it was therefore **AGREED** that the proposal form should state that CD Rom images are welcome, which would help in the quality assessment of future proposals.

3.2 ***The World in Colours***

(25 April – 24 June 2006) Ground Floor

It was **NOTED** that the run up to and installation of this show went well. The Exhibition held the private view and a small reception on Tuesday 2nd May with proceedings being started by Prof. Bundy for SOAS. There has been some press interest with some of the usual listings and more specialist press and a few group visits but the show is proving more specialists in its appeal. It was **NOTED** that the exhibition has been filmed by BSN and there is a day's seminar on Wednesday 14th June accompanying the exhibition to be held in the Brunei Gallery. The book shop has reported that the catalogue is one of the best selling.

3.3 ***Layered Lives***

(25 April – 24 June 2006) Lower Level

It was **NOTED** that the run up to this exhibition was hindered as all of the works were scheduled to be delivered on April 10th and the majority did not arrive until April 18th, and the last pieces until 24th April due to misunderstandings between the organisers and guest curators. The overall design of the show was changed accordingly to accommodate this.

There was a well attended private viewing of the exhibition again started by Prof. Bundy for SOAS with the outgoing Chair of the Armenian Institute Dr. Susan Pattie also speaking and the Armenian Ambassador was in attendance. The evening also hosted a violin solo by Levon Chilingirian, modern dance routine by Shakeh Tchilingirian Major and Poetry readings by Varand. There is a comprehensive programme of events, workshops and film showings accompanying the exhibition all of which have been so far well attended. There will also be a catalogue of the exhibition but this will not be available until next week.

Press interest has been slow with this project though a large piece was done by BSN and also Armenian TV.

This is the first exhibition for which the Gallery has introduced a commission (15%) for the works that are for sale.

3.4 **Sights of Light**

(25 April – 24 June 2006) First floor corridor

It was **NOTED** that the set up for this exhibition went well and three of the photographers were at the gallery for the first week to talk to visitors about the work, they were interviewed by BSN. There was no private view held for this show.

Visitors to the Gallery for the 1st 3 weeks of these exhibitions have been just over 2,100

4. **Schedule 2006 - 2008**

The schedule was **NOTED**.

5. **Forthcoming Exhibitions**

Members **NOTED** the following report

5.1 *Heroes of Our Time (13 July – 23 September 2006)*
Ground Floor

This is proceeding well, original title 'survival against the odds' has been changed. We have met and had dialogue with the designers and the private view is scheduled for Friday 14th July as nearest date to 100 days marking the anniversary of events.

5.2 *WSLOT: Women See Lot of Things (13 July – 23 September 2006)*
Lower Gallery

All proceeding well, funding was pending but now secured, including funds accessed with our assistance in approaching the Netherlands Embassy on behalf of the organizers. The private view is scheduled for Wednesday 12th July.

5.3 *Images from the End Game – Alexander Iyas*
(10 October – 09 December 2006) Ground Floor

All proceeding well, private view scheduled for Monday 9th October.

5.4 *A Future for the Past: The Petrie Collection of Archaeology from Palestine (Oct. – 9 Dec 2006) Lower Gallery*

Funding secured for exhibition and planned accompanying education programme. Peter Ucko still needs to secure funding for symposium. It was **NOTED** that Craig Clunas had suggested to Peter Ucko to consider provisionally booking a room for the intended event. The private view is still to be decided 10th or 11th October 2006.

5.5 *The New Mongolians (January – March 2007)*
Ground Floor (excluding rear)/Lower Level

This is proceeding well, provisional dates 17 Jan – 24 Mar. with private view on the 16th January 07. There are plans to hold a day's seminar and a programme of work shops. Prof. Craig Clunas suggested inviting Professor Charles Bawden, FBA (Professor Emeritus of Mongolian, SOAS) and other retired academics, who are particularly interested in this region.

It was **AGREED** that more use should be made of the schools excellent list of retired academics.

- 5.6 *Tapping into the Known – The Life and work of Christopher Okigbo Whole Gallery (April – June 2007)*
Proceeding well, provisional dates 11 April – 23 June 07.
- 5.7 *(Views from) The End of Arabia: Contemporary Art from Saudi Arabia and Yemen Ground Floor/Lower Level (July – September 2007)*
All proceeding well, Stephen Stapleton the organizer is looking to tie in events with the British Museums in particular the Middle East education department's events. Provisional dates 11 July – 22 September 07.
- 5.8 *From Soho Road to the Punjab (July – September 2007) First Floor*
Proceeding well.
- 5.9 *Keepers of the Fire (October – December 2007)*
Project postponed, now moved to the 2008 slot. It was **NOTED** we are still awaiting update from Sarah Stewart on new form of show that ties into British Library and British Museum events.
- 5.10 *Secrets of the River – Artefacts from the Brunei Museum (January – March 2008)*
All proceeding well.

6. New Proposals

- 6.1 *Britain in China, 1842 - 1957 (October – December 2007)*
It was **NOTED** that Prof. Craig Clunas was very strongly in favour of this proposal and expressed that although there were particularly sensitive issues, once the British Imperialism aspect is presented in the right context, it would fit well with the treasures of SOAS and there would be a big audience for family history,

It was **AGREED** to accept this proposal on certain conditions, that the title needs to be changed, certain derogatory images be withdrawn from exhibit and to clarify this is not about China, but Britain's in China. It was **AGREED** that prior to exhibit that captions, exhibition catalogues and programme material would have to be looked at carefully for wording. The committee suggested that Prof. Craig Clunas would approach the proposer Dr Robert Bickers and convey the committees concerns. It was **NOTED** that Professor Chan would also be prepared to give an opinion on material received.

- 6.2 *Visual Music: Art & Science of the pen in the work of Ahmed Moustafa (January – March 2009)*
Dr Anna Contadini managed to talk briefly to Dr Stephen Sperl as Ahmed Moustafa was out of the country. Anna will arrange to meet with Ahmed Moustafa upon his return to clarify the concerns of a one

man show and the realization of the exhibition as to whether it can go ahead for the time scheduled. It was suggested that the Turkish ambassador; Dr Bill Hale and Dr Ben Fortna could be approached for supportive assistance.

6.3 Refraction and Creation: Modernity and Identity in Taiwanese Crafts (April – June 2008)

More information being sought as to how the works will be exhibited and what are the relationships between the objects being shown including the context of the exhibition.

7. **Preliminary Proposals Declined**

The preliminary proposals declined by the Management Group were **NOTED**.

8. **Treasures of SOAS**

It was **NOTED** that Anna Contadini presented an update on research and conservation issues. The conservationist Helen Loveday who specializes in Islamic manuscripts prepared some preliminary reports on three Islamic manuscripts: the Anvar-I Suhayli, a Shahnama and the Ottoman atlas. Anna Contadini requested two quotes, first the cost of stabilizing sections and conservation of one exhibition double page opening and second, full conservation of the manuscripts. Helen Loveday expressed surprise at the good condition of the manuscripts. Her costs for minimal conservation are low. It was **NOTED** that conservation of two or three more pages would be cheaper. Minimal conservation would be an investment of just under £3k. Other such type of conservation could potentially be covered without costs by using Camberwell College of Art's MA conservation students. Full scale conservation will require fundraising. It was **NOTED** that Pamela Barrett has requested a copy of the report.

It was **AGREED** that the members of the Committee are fully committed to the Treasures of SOAS and agreement for funding would need to be sought with the Resources and Development Committees. It was **NOTED** that unless the preparatory costs of circa. £35,000 were guaranteed very soon, the Treasures of SOAS would not happen for the planned date.

It was **NOTED** that John Hollingworth's response to the recouping of costs through the sales of the catalogue may happen over a long period of time and not necessarily offer a fast return, as a number of catalogues will be offered as gifts to friends of SOAS and various departments. However, it was **AGREED** that a catalogue would help the fundraising process.

It was **NOTED** that once the treasure's existed, it would require running costs, from admin, collection management, graphics and display, which will need to be funded separately. The exhibition would be used to attract the funders. It was **NOTED** that there are two budgets in mind, the first budget consists of ¼ million pounds which would cover everything that needs to be done to the highest standard. The second in the region of £70 - £80K would allow the project to be realised and run over a few years in its minimum form.

It was **AGREED** that the Brunei Gallery Committee endorse that these findings should be realised by the Resources and Development Committees, starting with the preliminary preparatory budget.

Joy Onyejiako
18/05/06

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: To be confirmed